

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Quadrennial Energy Review Stakeholder Meeting**  
April 11, 2014

Mr. Secretary and Dr. Holdren, thank you for inviting me to share my perspective on the Quadrennial Energy Review. I agree with you that this is the right time to engage policymakers and the public in an examination of our energy infrastructure.

The “Q.E.R.” is an opportunity to look at where our energy infrastructure is today and where it needs to be tomorrow.

There is no question that this is a timely endeavor. A significant energy transition is underway in our country. State and federal renewable energy policies are paying off. We have doubled our capacity to generate renewable electricity from wind and solar in just five years. This has cut pollution and invigorated clean energy manufacturing. The cost of renewable energy is rapidly declining.

Cheap natural gas is transforming our electricity sector. This market reality is driving a shift away from the use of coal to generate electricity. New coal plants are simply not cost-effective to build today.

These changes are positive developments, but we need to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy and anticipate our future needs now.

For decades to come, our energy infrastructure decisions are going to have to revolve around the question of how we respond to climate change. Climate change is the biggest energy challenge we face as a country. We can’t examine America’s energy future without also examining how we respond to climate change.

Last week, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its multi-year report on the state of climate science. The world’s leading scientists examined the peer-reviewed science and confirmed that climate change is already happening “on all continents and across the oceans” and will get much worse if we do not act.

The impacts of runaway climate change will be severe: reduced crop yields ... more heat waves and disease ... decreased water availability ... more extreme weather events ... and the mass extinction of many of the world's species.

Our only real choice is whether to respond now while the costs are low and the economic opportunities high ... or wait until the costs soar and the opportunities diminish.

That means that we need to scrutinize the energy policy decisions that we make today for their impacts on climate change in the future. Every decision to build new fossil fuel infrastructure poses climate risks. We need to understand and weigh those risks. Otherwise, we risk locking in infrastructure that will produce carbon pollution for decades to come or creating stranded investments that must be shut down before they've served their useful life.

So this is exactly the right time for a Quadrennial Energy Review. The QER is an opportunity to offer a vision of what our energy infrastructure will need to look like to address climate change and transition to a clean energy economy. It is a key part of the President's Climate Action Plan. President Obama has committed to reducing our carbon pollution 17% by 2020 and to bend the post-2020 global emissions trajectory even further. The QER can provide a blueprint for achieving those carbon pollution reductions in the coming years and decades. It can translate carbon reduction goals into specific actions.

The energy choices we make today will determine whether we address the threat of climate change or leave our children and grandchildren with a climate catastrophe. The Quadrennial Energy Review can help us make the right choices.